

Agenda Item: II.

DATE: April 20, 2006

SUBJECT: GEAR UP Status Report

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Tennessee GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) initiative is a multi-year federal grant designed to significantly increase the number of socio-economically disadvantaged and underserved students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. In September 2005, the state of Tennessee was awarded the \$3.5 million annual grant by the U.S. Department of Education to provide services to nine counties across the state. These counties are as follows:

- Campbell
- Cocke
- Grundy
- Hardeman
- Johnson
- Lake
- Meigs
- Union
- Wayne

GEAR UP Tennessee will provide each of the participating counties with resources over the course of the grant to serve an entire cohort of students beginning in the seventh grade and will continue to assist such students through the completion of high school. Concurrently, GEAR UP funds will be used to provide college scholarships to qualifying students in the partnering counties to be utilized at any public or private institution located in Tennessee. Partnering together in the development and implementation of GEAR UP Tennessee are the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee Board of Regents, University of Tennessee System, and a host of other consultants and local/regional partnerships.

Materials associated with this agenda item will be distributed at the meeting.